
A
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

CONSECRATION

OF THE

Right Rev. WILLIAM GIBSON,
BISHOP OF ACANTHOS. A.V.N.

IN THE CHAPEL OF LULLWORTH CASTLE,

On SUNDAY, 5th of DECEMBER, 1790.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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On SUNDAY, 5th of DECEMBER, 1790.

Together with an INTRODUCTORY ACCOUNT of the
CONSECRATION, &c.

*By the Rev. John Milner,
Fellow of the Antiquarian Society.*

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M,DCC,XCI.



INTRODUCTION.

THE Author of the following discourse, having been solicited to give it to the Catholic public, is chiefly induced to comply with this request from a conviction that the practical lessons it contains are those only that are capable of restoring and preserving to us the long lost blessings of order and of its attendant peace. Without a cordial love of the Church, and a due submission to its authorised ministers, our present evils must be incurable, and fresh evils cannot fail to arise. Without a sense of the advantages of social union, and a proper subordination of the component parts, every kingdom, of whatever nature, must be divided against itself; and the eternal truth has pronounced, that *every kingdom divided against itself shall be laid waste.* Mat. xii. 25.

The sentiments that occur below, and which, it is hoped, are apposite to the occasion on
which

which they were delivered, will be found widely different from those of a late respectable writer, who, professing the same desire of restoring peace amongst English Catholics*, aims at effecting this by representing the subject of their divisions in a directly opposite point of view to that in which it has been considered by its "lawful judges and arbitrat-
 "tors," as he expressly calls them†, and who confessing that our pastors "most certainly
 "moved within the circle of their pastoral
 "charge for the direction and safety of their
 "flock‡," in their synod on the 19th October, 1789, endeavours by the most glaring sophistry § to sap the foundation of the sen-
 tence

* See a *View of the Oath*,
&c. by the Rev. Jos. Reeves.
 Pref.

† Page 11.

‡ Ibid.

§ To account for so harsh
 a term being applied to the
 production of a writer of
 character and abilities, the
 well-meaning reader is re-
 ferred, amongst other pas-
 sages, to pp. 20, 32 and 46,
 in which pulling down as un-
 safe the props on which a

certain instrument has hi-
 therto rested, he substitutes
 others of his own invention,
 but equally rotten. It has,
 therefore, been too hastily
 assumed, that the *View* is in
 all respects a mere echo of
 what is called the *Blue Book*.

—Speaking of our too noto-
 rious divisions this well-
 meaning writer exclaims,
 "O suffer not so much as a
 "whisper of our disagreee-
 "ment to steal out, lest our
 "adversaries

tence they then pronounced *, and exhibits an example of disobedience to lawful authority which is dangerous in proportion as the rest of his conduct is edifying.

It

“adversaries upbraid us.” With more reason may the author be permitted to exclaim, *O tell not in Geth, publish not in the streets of Ascalon* the grounds on which some Catholics in the above-mentioned works have been found willing to rest their consciences in a solemn appeal to God and their country, lest the enemies of the Church should rejoice. The author can with a safe conscience declare, that this consideration has been the chief restraint upon his pen from entering upon that ample but delicate matter.

* The author is aware of the unsatisfactory plea, that *the Oath has been altered since it was the subject of the episcopal censure*; but that censure being general, as the writer tells us, on what ground can he presume that

the single alteration, which has since been adopted, has deprived it of its pernicious qualities of being *ambiguous, derogating from Catholic principles, and confounding the spiritual and temporal powers together*, for which it was condemned by its lawful judges, as was notified to him by his own bishops public letters of November 2, and December 24, 1789? From the latter of these he learns, that not one, but *several parts* of the said Oath were *condemnable*. Besides, he well knows that these pastors, “*moving within the circle of their pastoral charge*,” declared in their Encyclical letter dated Hammersmith, Oct. 21, 1789, that “*none of the faithful ought to take any new Oath, or sign any new declaration in doctrinal matters*,” &c. and therefore

It must be a satisfaction to every true child of the Church to be informed, that this learned and deservedly respected clergyman has made a submissive apology to his bishop for the just subject of complaint which he had afforded him by the tenor of the above-mentioned publication, in which, amongst other things, he alledges that his work has undergone an essential alteration since it went out of his hands into those of his revisors.

It having pleased Divine Providence to deprive us of two out of our four bishops at a time when we stood most in want of their pastoral guidance and authority, their places, after a stormy interregnum, have canonically, and in perfect conformity with the rules established in such cases above a century ago when our districts were first formed, been filled with prelates of unimpeachable characters

fore à fortiori not to persuade others to do so, "*without the previous approbation of their respective bishops.*" and it has been a thousand times boldly asserted, that *the Oath, as now altered, is strictly conformable to the Declaration*; whereas the fact

One remark more seems necessary for the sake of the well-meaning, but misinformed Catholics. Our author gives us to understand, is, that one half of the objectionable passages in the *Oath*, as it stands at the present moment, never existed in the *Declaration* at all.

and

and of universally acknowledged virtue and talents, whose long-tried piety, orthodoxy, zeal and learning in their former stations, have recommended them as fit persons to continue that succession of truly apostolical pastors with which this island has been peculiarly blessed ever since the re-establishment of the prelacy in it.

The author is not unacquainted with the epidemical phrenzy that prevails in this and other countries, for establishing certain chimerical rights of man in a business in which man has no right at all, but in which all things are to be conducted in conformity with the laws laid down by Jesus Christ; I mean the principle of vesting in the people at large the authority of appointing their own prelates. This, however, he considers as one effort of that spirit of anarchy which has already so much increased the miseries of mankind*.

He

* Since the delivery of the following discourse a pamphlet has been published and advertised, no doubt with the view of disposing the legislature in our favor, in which the prevailing principles of ecclesiastical anarchy are developed to an extent, that it is hoped will alarm and reclaim such well meaning Catholics as have unwarily abetted them. This motley manufacture of schismatical falsehood and indecency is dated from Lincoln's Inn, and

He will not now repeat what he has said in a former work on that subject, in relation to the antient discipline of the Church from the time of the apostles themselves, in relation to its
present

bears a signature with which many persons, not more respectable for their birth than for their orthodoxy and piety, are connected; which therefore, according to the rule laid down p. 85 for judging of sentiments by consanguinity, must be a forgery. The clergy, who in a former work had been summoned to make a schismatical election of a bishop, in this are disqualified from voting as men who find their account in having bad and unenlightened prelates. The lay people of London are now, it seems, to be convened, in order to displace their present lawful consecrated prelate, and to place another gentleman, even against his own inclinations, in the episcopal chair. The scattered Catholics of this mission are declared competent to abrogate the discipline of the Universal Church, though sanctioned by General Councils, and to the ground-work of this discipline, not to the perversity of wicked men, all heresies and schisms for many ages backward are ascribed. The Catholic bishops of this kingdom, and of Christendom in general, are brought in guilty of disloyalty, cruelty and perjury: but as to the Chief Bishop and the Holy See, no calumny appears too barefaced, no invective too gross to effect the object, which all heretics and schismatics have had in view, of rendering them odious and contemptible in the eyes of the faithful. All this, however, is easily understood, and forms part of that plan which a few individuals have long had in contemplation for engaging Catholics to throw
off

present universal discipline as sanctioned by General Councils, and in relation to our peculiar circumstances which for various reasons cannot possibly admit of a change: he cannot however suppress the satisfaction he feels at finding the opinion he there laid down concerning the consequences to be expected from popular elections of bishops confirmed by the most profound and eloquent of modern writers, the firm friend of human nature in all its gradations from the galley to

off the divine jurisdiction of the Supreme Pastor, which is essential to their belonging to the *one fold* of Christ. But why the clergy of Douay College should be so severely satyrized as neglectful of missionary labours, or how a new edition of the Douay Bible can give offence, or for what reason a panegyric is pronounced on prostitutes, at the expence of our Catholic Ladies, who are compared with the riotous and sanguinary fish-women of Paris, does not at first sight appear.

The author had prepared a refutation of the arguments and statements contained in this scandalous production, when by a great number of letters received from various and respectable quarters he was dissuaded from publishing, and made sensible that the end he had in view was already answered in the reception the pamphlet has met with from the Catholic public. Hence he is induced to leave such passages in his late *Answer to a Layman's Letter*, as are here either misquoted or misrepresented, to speak for themselves on a second perusal, with the candid and intelligent reader.

the throne. The passage itself from this most celebrated publication of the age may be seen below.

The Right Reverend William Gibson, the first appointed of the two above-mentioned prelates, has for the last ten years been President of the English Secular College at Douay, a post which in importance and dignity is considered as next to the prelacy. In this conspicuous station he could not fail of becoming well known, not only to the prelates and and other eminent Catholics of the British islands, but also to many of the most eminent ecclesiastical characters abroad, particularly at Rome, from several of whom he received the most distinguished marks of confidence and regard. It is not, therefore, surprising that the strong though unsolicited recommendations, as we have since learned, that were sent up from these several quarters to the Sacred Congregation in favor of this prelate, joined to their own long experience of the proper qualifications in him above rehearsed, and the consideration of his unavoidable connexions with the Northern district, by his being executor to his worthy deceased brother, should cause him to be unanimously represented

presented to the Chief Pastor as a fit person to succeed to his important charge.

No sooner was his appointment known, and that he was desirous of receiving the episcopal character from the Dean of the Prelatic College, the venerable Bishop of the West, than a respectable gentleman in that district, who, amongst seven congregations which he supports in different districts, has three in that of the North alone, testified his desire, for the mutual convenience of the prelates, and for the performance of that awful ceremony with the dignity which is due to it, that it might take place at his beautiful chapel at Lullworth, and that he might be permitted to charge himself with the trouble and expence attendant on it. Accordingly this elegant Grecian structure, the beauty of which has just been heightened by some new pictures brought from Italy, &c. shone in all the splendor of the costly treasury belonging to it. Its rich sacerdotal habits received an addition from the princely sacrists of Wardour Castle, and the harmonious organ and choir were tuned to inspire suitable sentiments of reverence and devotion. Besides the two prelates, the consecrator and the elect, there were five other officiating clergymen in rich vestments, and seven inferior

rior ministers in clerical ornaments, amongst whom were the four eldest sons of the religious patron. He himself, like another David before the ark, led the band of sacred singers, *choosing*, in the sentiment of that holy king for himself and for his children, *rather to be the least in God's house, than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners.* Psalm lxxxiii. The other persons of note, besides the family of the Castle and the stated congregation, were the Right Honourable Lord Arundell, the Honourable Mr. Clifford and Lady, Mr. Raymond Arundell, Major O'Brien and Lady, the right Reverend John Douglas, Bishop Elect, who arrived too late to acquire the necessary hability for bearing a part in the august ceremony, &c. *

The awful examen, made with a dignity and piety perfectly according with the character of the venerable consecrator, the humble prostrations, the all-important imposition of hands, the mysterious unctions, multiplied benedictions, joint reception of the adorable

* The consecration of this worthy prelate has since been performed, viz. on Sunday 19th of December, by the Right Rev. Bishop Gibson, at the same place, and with equal dignity and splendor, through the pious liberality of the above-mentioned respectable gentleman.

species, the speaking investiture of episcopal insignia, majestic inthronation and dignified solemn blessing; all this being accompanied with the most sublime and moving prayers adapted to the occasion, and combined with the liturgy of the tremendous sacrifice performed in all its pomp, could not but constitute a solemnity truly affecting and elevating, which produced the most sensible effects on the persons present, no less than on the elect himself.—It was at the beginning of this striking ceremony that the following discourse was delivered.

The passage alluded to above, p. xii. from the celebrated work entitled *Reflections on the Revolutions in France*, &c. 5th ed. p. 220.

Speaking of the fanatic principle in favor of *popular elections to bishoprics and parochial cures*, Mr. Burke says,

“ This in the present state
 “ of the world would be
 “ the last corruption of the
 “ Church, and the utter
 “ ruin of the clerical cha-
 “ racter.”

Then

Then adverting to the abuses by which church preferments are liable to be obtained under the established patronages that prevail at present, he goes on,

“ But the other mode of ecclesiastical canvass subjects them infinitely more surely and more generally to all the evil arts of low ambition, which, operating on and through greater numbers, will produce mischief in proportion.”

A DISCOURSE, &c.

Tu es Petrus, &c.

Thou art Peter, (that is to say a Rock) and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. St. Mat. c. 16. ver. 18.

ON the present awful occasion, dear Christians, on which we behold the Church of Christ, even in the day of her greatest affliction and depression, providing for her miraculous indefectibility, by perpetuating the succession of her Prelates through the never-failing ministry of her Supreme Pastor in the chair of Peter, the text of scripture which I have repeated to you naturally presents itself to our consideration: a text which, like the Church itself to which it appertains, is too conspicuous to be overlooked, too firm to be destroyed or shaken.

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From

From this glorious promise which Jesus Christ made to St. Peter, in return for the clear and explicit declaration of his divinity which the latter was inspired by the heavenly Father to make, we may draw the following conclusions: That the infernal enemies of the Church, signified by the *gates of hell*, will never cease to wage war against it: that, however these enemies may prevail over individual members of the Church, they will never succeed so far as to compass the destruction of the Church itself; and that this its indefectibility is, under Divine Providence, owing to the form of government Christ has established in it; in other words, to that regular and well disciplined hierarchy, in which, while the faithful rest securely on the authority of their pastors, the pastors themselves are preserved in unity and orthodoxy by being immovably fixed to one common center, which is the Rock of Peter spoken of in my text. At the present alarming crisis, the most threatening perhaps that has occurred in the long history of the Church, it must be a most interesting scene to behold in what manner the divine prediction before us has hitherto been fulfilled in its several parts: we shall see that it is not matter of mere speculation, but of the most serious

serious practical tendency. For first, whilst, on one hand, we are taught to venerate the Church as the object of the Almighty's peculiar care, and to trust for its safety, in the most imminent dangers, to a protection that it has so often experienced; we are taught, on the other hand, to tremble and to take precautions for our individual safety, lest we, like so many millions of others, should deserve to become aliens from its blessings and its hopes. In the second place, while we contemplate the general means by which the Almighty has preserved the Church entire and incorrupt during so many ages, amidst the sport and malice of human passions, we learn what we have to trust to for safety in our present peculiar dangers; I mean, we learn a due veneration for the sacred hierarchy, to the perpetuity of which the present august ceremony is subordinate.

But it is the Spirit of the Most High alone that can bestow an efficacious blessing on this ceremony, and on these instructions which in the name of the Church I am now addressing to you, that both the former and the latter may answer their intended effects in your regard. Let us then invoke this divine Spirit to confer the desired blessing through the intercession of the most acceptable of his creatures,

the chief honor, the' most powerful succor,
and most perfect emblem of his holy Church,
faying, in the words he himself has inspired,
Hail Mary, &c.

It is not in the present passage of scripture alone that the immortality of Christ's spotless Spouse, I mean his holy Church, is foretold. The whole economy of the word of God, if I may so speak, turns upon this point, or is referable to it. The grand object which mankind were taught to look forward to from the very creation, was the establishment of a new and happier order of things, which, when it began was to have no end, in short of the blessed and eternal kingdom of the Messiah. In the 88th Psalm the Almighty is even introduced *swearing by his own most sacred being*, that the spiritual *seed of David shall remain for ever*, and that *his throne, the Church, shall continue unmoved like the sun itself for ever in his sight*. The accomplishment of this often repeated prophecy is a standing miracle proclaiming the truth of the Church, and still growing more palpable and conspicuous by the lapse of ages. During the eighteen centuries the Church has subsisted empires have risen and fallen, arts and sciences have been forgotten and revived, the manners of man-
kind

kind have undergone repeated revolutions, the whole face of the world has been often changed, while the Church of Christ, unlike any thing else here below, but in perfect conformity with the predictions of scripture, has continued immovable and unaltered, with the same code of belief, the same form of government, and with an uninterrupted succession of pastors, and in particular of her chief pastors in the See of Peter, to whom the promises in my text were particularly addressed.

The first grand trial to which the Church was exposed consisted in those severe persecutions which, with a few intervals, it endured for near three centuries. In fact, who would not have thought that an institution propagated by a few of the lowest order of mankind, equally destitute of art and of power, must have sunk under the power of the greatest empire that the world ever knew, directed with so much violence, and for so long a time against it? But so far from this being the case, *the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, smote the huge metallic statue and reduced it to dust, and became itself a mountain filling the whole earth*, as had been revealed to Daniel, c. ii. In short, the blood of the Martyrs was,
in

in the hand of God, the seed of Christianity, as an eye-witness relates, and the Church of Christ became every where triumphant.

To this exterior violence succeeded a more dangerous evil from the subtil poison which innumerable heretics, rising like the locusts in the Apocalypse from the bottomless pit, endeavoured to infuse into the Churches vitals. Each of these succeeding sects of heretics, aided by the secular power, seemed for a time on the very point of compassing the infernal foes hellish design; but these private opinions, like other errors of the human brain, after fluttering for a day, fell to the ground. God every where raised up holy pastors and doctors eminent for their sanctity, no less than for their learning, who acting in concert by pressing close round the common standard of orthodoxy the creed of the Roman Church extolled by the Apostle, *Rom. i. c. 8.* proved an overmatch for these numerous hosts of the Churches foes, with all their exterior advantages.

But lo! a new deluge appears, threatening at once to overwhelm the Church, Numberless hords of barbarians from the North and the East come pouring in upon the Christian world, and seem bent, not so much
on

on subduing it, as on sweeping away its individuals with all their civil and religious institutions, and with every monument that was capable of calling them to memory. The inundation indeed was general, its force was irresistible; the Romans, the Gauls, and the other civilized nations were no more to be found, the arts fell, science became nearly extinct, but the Church of Christ, by his omnipotent protection, rose superior to the common ruin; it even subdued these universal conquerors, and subjected them to the sweet and civilizing yoke of the gospel.

Not to detain you with less interesting events, near three centuries ago an ill-omened star appeared in the Northern hemisphere, and drew a third part of the heavenly host along with it into the deep abyss of heresy. But that faith which the Northern nations, by their tepidity, deserved to lose, was *transferred to other nations that brought forth fruit in due season*. New worlds were then discovered, and new resources for the Church appeared; amongst these I cannot but mention one, which is honored by the Church with that title in her solemn office, and which the chief pastor declared to have been specially raised up by God against the prevailing evils of the time,
a religious

a religious society that was deservedly honored with the sacred name of JESUS, because it was ever most active and successful in making that saving name known to those distant nations, and which on account of the signal and extensive services it rendered to the Church, was always the first object of the calumnies and persecutions of her enemies. It was at that time, my dear brethren, that this our country, once known as *the island of saints*, having gradually fallen from its primitive fervor, deserved to be deprived of that light which had twice been communicated to it by the watchful care of the successor of St. Peter. Still, however, a remnant was left, which by its zeal and piety made amends to the Church for the scandal occasioned by the apostacy of their countrymen; these were traduced *as deceivers yet were they true*, 2 Cor. vi. *they were racked, not accepting of deliverance that they might find a better resurrection, they had trials of mockeries and stripes, moreover of bonds and of prisons, they were stoned, they were cut asunder—of whom the world was not worthy*, Heb. xi. It is to their constancy and piety, to their labors and to their blood that we are indebted for being exempt from the general mist of error, a mist, through which the
spotless

spotless spouse of Jesus Christ, whose children we glory in being called, appears to such as are involved in it, in no other shape and colours than those of the filthy harlot described in the book of Revelations.

The present day, my dear brethren, presents us with the still more alarming spectacle of nations that heretofore formed the strength and glory of the Church rushing forward at once to the very brink of infidelity, while many others, who do not go these lengths, are infected with a spirit of religious anarchy, which renders them impatient of the necessary control of their pastors, and inflames them in particular with a contempt and hatred of Christ's Vicar on earth, their common father, to whom they owe such infinite obligations, as absurd and unnatural as it is impious and fatal. Would to God this spirit were confined to the countries from which it took its rise, and that our little flock, weakened as it is by frequent desertions, and exposed as it is to legal restraints, and to the more dangerous temptations of worldly example and worldly blandishments, were not infected with the prevailing distemper. Would to God that the scandal even of the dissensions occasioned by this spirit of unsubmission could be con-

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cealed.

ceased. But, alas! our calamities are now notorious to our enemies no less than our friends. Your venerable and experienced pastor, in whose presence and by whose authority I now speak, who never before, in the course of a long, a respected and a beloved ministry, was obliged to have recourse to such a measure, has found it necessary to proclaim to you the existence of this scandal, in order to guard you against it, and to call upon you for your support, in order to enable him and his worthy colleagues to exert their just authority to put an end to it. Yes, dear Christians, however irksome the task is, there is a necessity of announcing to you, that there has been of late years a great falling off amongst many of our brethren from that piety which made the Catholics of this island the *sweet odor of Christ* throughout the Church. There is a leaven of the irreligion and anarchy of the times fermenting amongst us, and the state of our affairs has almost come to a frightful crisis. Unless the Almighty should interfere in an unexpected manner, as he has already done more than once, or unless, by a more benign exertion of his mercy, he should infuse into the hearts of Catholics a becoming spirit of union and docility, yet a very little time and

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we are a divided people, no longer united in ecclesiastical government or communion. But remember, my dear brethren, that if we are split into two societies, but one of us can belong to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church; and that will be the portion, which, in hearing the Churches pastors, listens to Christ himself, that will be the portion, which is found adhering to apostolic Rock and the immovable chair of Peter founded upon it. My heart bleeds with anguish when I consider the many and dreadful evils that must be the consequence of such a fatal schism; but without a spirit of docility on the part of the flock the evil is inevitable. The pastors cannot abandon their trust, because they are to give an account of our souls; they cannot permit infection to come near their folds; they must *retain the model of sound words*, 2 Tim. i.; they must *bannish the profane novelties of speech*, 1 Tim. vi.; and *if any one is contentious*, says the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. *we have no such custom, nor the church of God.* It is the part of folly to shut our eyes against impending evils; wisdom directs us to foresee and prevent them.

○ You have seen that the Church of Christ is the subject of his perpetual care; let this, as I said above, inspire you with love and veneration for it, and with a confidence for its safety

even in the present dreadful storm ; but as you must be sensible that the promises of scripture are not made to individuals, but to the Church at large, let this fill you with a salutary fear lest you should be abandoned to the effects of your own pride and self-confidence, the rock on which millions of your brethren have heretofore suffered the shipwreck of their faith. Be cautious how you tamper with the sacred bonds of faith and discipline which unite you with the Universal Church, and with its visible head here on earth. Remember, that though the Church is necessary for you, you are not necessary for the Church. To nourish this love and veneration for the Church, call to mind all the obligations you have, all the endearing bonds that unite you to this your sacred and tender mother. It was she that brought you forth at the baptismal font to Jesus Christ, and to the inheritance of his rich graces and glories by a new and happier birth than that for which you are indebted to your carnal mother. It is she that has enabled the meanest of you, who has not rejected her honors, far beyond the princes of the earth, and has entitled the poorest of you to lift up his eyes to the riches of heaven and to call them his own. It is she that keeps open
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for you the inexhaustible fund of Christ's passion and merits, which she applies to the several diseases and wants of your souls, and that, in particular, spreads before you that seraphic banquet in which you are invited to unite yourselves in the most tender and extatic intercourse with the majesty of heaven. It is this Church to which you have the happiness of belonging that teaches you to sanctify, and that renders sweet and meritorious the pains and labors of your short life. It is she that will stand by you, that will comfort and support you in the distress and agonies of death; nor will she abandon you even beyond the grave, but even there will extend her charitable and efficacious succor to your afflicted souls. It is for this your holy Mother the Church that the apostles have preached and labored, that the holy fathers have written and taught, that the martyrs have shed torrents of blood, and that a million of saints have spent their substance and their lives. The Church, in short, is the only object of the divine complacency here below, the spouse of Jesus Christ, for whose sake alone the world subsists. It is not that kings and princes may aggrandize themselves here on earth; that statesmen may raise temporary structures of politics, and from time
to

time new-model the face of the earth; that a few philosophers may indulge in uncertain speculations, and that some millions of our fellow-creatures may eat, drink and sleep like other animals, and leave children behind them to walk in the same unimportant round; it is not for such purposes as these that the Almighty suspends his justice, and permits himself to be insulted by the sins of the world; it is that the Church militant may answer her intended purpose in bringing forth *as many as are pre-ordained to eternal life*, in order to fill the vacant seats at the banquet of eternal bliss in the Church triumphant.

You cannot, my dear brethren, mistake this Church, which is of such infinite consequence to you in this world and in the next; she is every where to be found, because she is the Catholic or Universal Church; and, in fact, she every where bears the name of CATHOLIC written upon her forehead. In quality, therefore, of her true children, be jealous of this glorious distinctive name, by which she and they have in all ages been known. Never acknowledge any other title, except this pure, unmixed, unqualified name of Catholic; a name which all heretics and schismatics have in vain attempted to ravish from her, but which no
true

true Catholic has been found willing to renounce, or desirous to debase by alloying it with any other.

But above all, my dear brethren, remember that the Church to which you belong is holy no less than it is Catholic, and that it is not less incumbent on you to exhibit as another beacon to your night wandering brethren the mark of sanctity than that of catholicity. Without charity in both its branches, without humility, patience, chastity, temperance, and other congenial virtues, *a faith strong enough to move mountains*, and the strictest union with the only true Catholic Church will avail you nothing; without the practice of these virtues, there is reason to fear that you may not even preserve your faith; for experience shews that the understanding is, in general, the dupe of the passions, and that we become irreligious in proportion as we become fearful of the consequences of believing; or rather, Almighty God withdraws from us the light of faith, when we do not make use of it for the regulation of our morals. However, as the above mentioned virtues are to be obtained, nourished and increased by the practices of a devout life, particularly by prayer, the use of the sacraments, listening to the word of God, flying
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the infection of bad example, and stimulating ourselves by such as is good; hence, dear Christians, be assiduous in improving such advantages as heaven in its mercy has for this purpose put into your hands. Happily for you, my brethren, you are particularly favored with every choicest advantage for attaining to true piety that your circumstances can possibly admit of, so that looking around you, you may exclaim with the Prophet, Psalm cxlvii. *He hath not done thus to every people, nor hath he made known his justices to them.* You have enlightened and zealous pastors to expound the word of God to you, and to lead you by the safest ways to the summit of Christian perfection. You have the holy sacraments laid open to your spiritual wants, and in conformity with the intention of the Church, you are invited often to draw life and health to your souls from these heavenly sources. It is given to you frequently to assist at the all powerful and tremendous sacrifice, which, with the other services of the Church, being performed with due dignity and devotion to excite your fervor, cannot but be a most powerful assistance to you. Finally, instead of the contagion of worldly example, from which by your very situation you are in a manner insulated,

lated, you have subjects of edification before you, in those whose example must be of the greatest weight in your regard. When I contemplate all this, and much more that I now suppress, particularly with relation to the time in which we live, and to other circumstances, I cannot avoid exclaiming with the Prophet, Psalm cxvii. *This is the work of the Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes.* To him be the glory thereof; but as to the principal instruments in his hands of your enjoying all these inestimable advantages, may their reward not be in the empty voice of human applause, but in the benediction of Jacob; *May God give to thee*, said his inspired father, *of the dew of heaven and of the richness of the earth*: I mean by this, the dew of heavenly grace here, and a superabundance of the good things of the Lord in the land of the living hereafter.

2. The preservation of the Church, so much beyond the period of all human institutions, is, as I observed to you before, a standing miracle, which is the more shining in proportion to the frequency and solemnity with which this event has been predicted. But we may observe that the Almighty, even in the performance of his miracles, generally accommodates himself to the ordinary course of things,

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by making use of such natural causes as have a kind of tendency to produce the event in question, however inadequate they would be for this purpose without his special agency. Thus, in the miraculous preservation of his Church, he has given it that form which was best calculated for stability and incorruption; and, like the wise-man mentioned in the gospel, Matt. vii. has founded it upon a rock, against which the winds and waves spend their force in vain. He has built in exact symmetry and proportion the beautiful pyramid of his hierarchy, gradually rising to a point: I mean, he has established that due subordination of the component parts of his Church, from the lowest to the highest, which is necessary for the existence of every society whatever; and to his heavenly host thus marshalled and disciplined, he has superadded a celestial force that renders it invincible against all the myriads of infernal foes which the gates of hell have never ceased, and will never cease to pour out against it. Christ has not left the interpretation and execution of his laws, which has been found impracticable in every system of legislation, to the caprice and self-love of individuals, but has provided a living speaking authority, which he commands us to have
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recourse to in case of necessity, and to *hear* under pain of being considered *as heathens and publicans*. In short, he has appointed pastors duly authorized, to direct us in all that relates to the business of salvation, commanding us to *hear them* as we would *hear himself*, and assuring us that any contempt of them redounds on him who has given them their commissions. Luke x. These pastors themselves are amenable to the Shepherd in chief, whom the Master of the flock has commanded not only to *feed his lambs*, but also to *feed his sheep*, John xxi. whom the lambs in other respects are bound to follow. It is this their attraction to one common center which is the principle of their mutual adhesion. It is by their being founded on the rock of Peter, that they partake of that security against the force and arts of hell promised in my text. From what has been already said, you will conclude that it is neither for you nor me, nor for the most learned doctor of the Church, to decide for himself in controverted points of religion, the question each one is to ask is, *what does the Church teach?* This question is to be resolved to him in the first instance by his pastor, and his testimony of the doctrine and tradition of the Church is unquestionably a rule to him

in the first instance, from which it is not lawful for him to depart, but by an appeal to a higher authority; and that must be to a speaking authority, not to a dead letter, in case he is in his conscience persuaded, that his immediate pastors hold a different language from that of the Church, and its living organ in the chair of Peter. Without entering into any contested questions concerning the prerogatives of the tribunal just mentioned, all true Catholics agree that without a formal opposition on the part of the Church, an instance of which has never yet occurred, the doctrinal decisions of the successor of St. Peter properly notified to the Church at large, are a certain proof of its tradition, and therefore are an unerring rule of our faith; all agree, with the modern Father of the Gallican Church at their head, that in every possible division of the Church, that part which is in communion with the See of Peter, is the inheritor of the promises of Christ. These conclusions evidently flow from the very essence of the Churches infallibility, which, without them in the present state of things, would answer no effectual purpose, but would be a mere sounding title; in short, we should be as much at a loss concerning many acknowledged heresies

sies in the two last centuries, and concerning such future heresies we have reason to fear, will from time to time arise, as if no such infallibility had ever been established. Nor is the doctrine above stated that of modern divines alone. The writings of the ancient fathers all teem with the same. I might detain you whole hours were I to repeat the express and invincible texts that occur to this effect; but let the great light of the Western Church, the illustrious prelate and doctor St. Ambrose, speak for the rest, whose words are these, "He agrees with the Catholic bishops, who agrees with the Church of Rome." *Orat. de Obiit Satyr.*

I have intimated that it is not peculiar to the Church to require, but that every kind of civil society requires a due subordination of its component parts, and the existence of an efficient, living, speaking authority in order to explain and enforce its laws. No kind of legislature has yet been found in which the interpretation and the execution of the laws could be entrusted to unauthorized individuals. Under no kind of social contract is it lawful or reasonable to say, the proper judges have decided wrong, I am wiser than they, and under that pretext to take the law into our own hands,
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instead of appealing to a higher tribunal where such a tribunal exists. To convince ourselves of the necessity of subordination and submission for the happiness of individuals, and for the peace and even the existence of society, you need but cast your eyes across that narrow channel before you: in the ruins of that once mighty and religious empire, in the accumulated distress of all ranks of people there, except a few seditious individuals, you will see the dismal effects both of civil and ecclesiastical anarchy.

Already, my dear brethren, you anticipate the application of these practical reflections to the particular perilous circumstances to which you are at present exposed; you are already convinced by what general means God will preserve those whom he has pre-ordained to perpetuate his holy Church in this nation, should things come to those fatal extremities they now threaten. It is by listening to the direction of our pastors, and in particular to those of the Master Shepherd, who has the care of the whole flock, that we shall be preserved from the infernal wolves. We shall not be at a loss to comprehend their instructions, because in fact they have already spoken and forewarned us; and the decisions of
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our own upright and enlightened pastors have been echoed back in accents of applause from every quarter of the church to which they have reached, and particularly from the chair of unity and orthodoxy. To say that neither your pastors at home nor those abroad are capable of understanding a formula, the very nature of which is, that it should be level with the meanest understandings, besides being an insufferable insult, is an heretical device, under which Jansenism endeavours to hide her deformity at present; but which the Church of God has exploded in practice each time she has condemned a heterodox, or sanctioned an orthodox proposition. To say that your pastors are averse to your tendering a mere profession of the allegiance you owe your temporal sovereign, is to belie their doctrine, their practice, and their solemn oaths. No, dear Christians, there is not an atom of disloyalty in the opposition your pastors make to that confused, undigested formula, from which as much mischief has proceeded, or may be expected to proceed, as from those other lay doctrinals the *Henotichon* of Zeno, or the *Ecthesis* of Heraclius. There is no real opposition between what is required of you, even at the present time, by *God* on one hand and by
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Cæſar on the other. I ſpeak in the preſence of ſeveral noble and reſpectable perſonages, who are living proofs that it is poſſible at this very time to give perfect ſatisfaction both to the Church and to the State. I ſpeak within walls equally known to, equally reſpected, and that have been equally honored by Pius VI. and by George III. On this ſpot I can proclaim the ſpiritual prerogatives of the Succeſſor of St. Peter, without exciting the jealouſy of the Britiſh Sovereign; and I can equally inculcate the allegiance due to the Monarch of Britain, without any apprehenſion of censure, nay, with an abſolute confidence of approbation from the Head of the Church. As his Holineſs knows that this is not the ſeat of irreligion or heterodoxy, ſo his Maſteſty is convinced that it is not a harbor for ſedition or diſloyalty. If this be ſo, and if our duty to the Church and to the State be ſo perfectly conſiſtent with each other, what, in the name of heaven and earth! are we contending about? Why are brethren with threatening looks and brandiſhed arms drawn up in battle array againſt each other? O that my humble voice, which however is in perfect uniſon with thoſe of the venerable prelates now before me, could at this moment reach the ears of every well meaning

meaning Catholic throughout the kingdom, and under that title I comprehend infinitely the greater part of our brethren who are at present engaged in an unnatural and fatal contest with their pastors: Fellow Catholics! I would exclaim, children of the same tender mother! our fellow guests at the banquet of heavenly sweetness and love! our fellow soldiers in the trial of persecution and disgrace for the name of Christ! shall we from henceforward become aliens to each other? shall we give new cause of affliction to our common mother in the day of her greatest sorrow, and a fresh subject of triumph to our common foes? Will you break that bond in which the essence and hopes of our catholicity consists? and all for your attachment to a form of speech, for the sake of a few grammatical phrases, when, as you assure us, we have all the same belief? God knows we are ready to make infinitely greater sacrifices for you, that we may retain you in the bonds of Christian charity and Catholic union. There is no sacrifice we will hesitate to make for this purpose, except that of our consciences, for the rights of which you so strongly plead. There is no duty whatsoever, which either you or our temporal superiors have hitherto point-

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ed out as forming part of our civil allegiance, which we will not, as we have already done, again bind ourselves down to, provided our pastors are permitted to fulfil their duty in taking care that we do not thereby trench on the inalienable rights of God and his Church. O my God! do thou in thy mercy avert the dreadful evils with which thy poor little flock is threatened. *If we have left thy law, and have not walked in thy justices, remember thy gracious promise made to the Church, to visit our iniquities in thy rod, and our sins in thy stripes, but not to remove thy mercy from us.* Psa. lxxxviii. Yes, punish us, if necessary, in our temporal means; but, O! *remove not our candlestick*; cut not off any part of us from the comforts and blessings we enjoy in thy holy Church.

My brethren, I am sensible I have taken up too much of that time which ought to have been devoted to the awful ceremony that is just going to take place; I leave therefore to your own observation whatever there is of edification and consolation, whatever there is that calls for your fervent thanksgiving to Almighty God, in the character of the worthy prelates at the altar. With one of them you have been long acquainted; he is the pastor whose
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voice you have been accustomed to hear and obey. With regard to the other, I shall barely observe, that he comes to you with the apostolic recommendation of not having taken upon himself, or solicited a charge, which indeed to a thinking Christian is now less than ever an object of ambition. *No one, says St. Paul, Heb. v. taketh to himself the honour, but he that is called of God, like to Aaron.* He comes, however, to you from that quarter where his qualifications for the important ministry are well known; from that quarter which has long supplied you with a succession of saintlike pastors, worthy the seats of the Augustines and the Paulinuses, who thence brought the light of faith to your infidel ancestors, and which has just now sent you another equally beloved and respected prelate, who is destined by heaven to confer the greatest blessings on the cause of religion in this country. In short, he comes to you from the Universal Pastor, whose spiritual authority is confined within no other limits than those of the Catholic Church itself; but to whose immediate and special jurisdiction it is necessary you should be subject, from the loss of the regular ministry amongst you, and from your having no other than what he, in his univer-

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ful solicitude and bounty has provided you with, as well from other circumstances.

In conclusion, let us accompany the edifying ceremony that is just going to take place with our fervent prayers that the Spirit of God would deign to confer his blessing upon it, not only for the sake of the elect himself, but also for the Churches sake, and for our own sake; remembering that the true pastoral spirit is not more necessary for the prelates themselves, than it is for the benefit of their flocks; inasmuch as *every pontiff taken out from among men is appointed for men.* Heb. v. Hence, as slothful and worldly pastors are the severest of God's judgments on the sins of the people, so such as are pious, zealous, learned and orthodox, are the choicest of his blessings; the great means of our sanctification here, and of our eternal happiness hereafter.

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